



E429

.H94

HOLLINGER
pH 8.5
MILL RUN F3-1543

SPEECH

OF

HON. R. M. T. HUNTER, OF VIRGINIA,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 31, 1850,

On suspending our Diplomatic Relations with Austria.

The Senate proceeded to the consideration of the following resolution, submitted on the 24th ultimo, by Mr. Cass:

Resolved, That the Committee on Foreign Relations be instructed to inquire into the expediency of suspending diplomatic relations with Austria.

Mr. HUNTER addressed the Senate as follows:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I had supposed at one time that this resolution would have been permitted to sleep upon the table. Had such been the disposition of the mover, I should never have called it up; for I had no desire to speak upon its merits. But when I found that we were to be pressed to a vote upon it, I felt it to be due to myself and those whom I represent, to offer the reasons which influence my vote. This resolution has not only the sanction of high authority here, but a large portion of the press has sustained it; and efforts have been made to give public opinion such a direction as to place under its ban all those who oppose it. Gentlemen seem to suppose so, at least; for various propositions have been made to express our sympathy, as a Government, for the Hungarians, in some other mode, by those who have opposed this particular form of action. Most of those who have spoken seem to contemplate the propriety at least, if not the necessity, of expressing our sympathy in the Hungarian cause in some form of legislative action. As I find myself opposed to the propositions which have yet been made upon this subject, it is perhaps necessary for my own defence to trouble you with a brief statement of my views upon this question; and in giving them I shall confine myself to the proposition before us. That, sir, if I understand it, proposes to suspend our diplomatic intercourse with Austria, for the purpose, avowed in debate, of expressing our indignation at the conduct of that Government in the late Hungarian struggle. Now, sir, when this resolution is considered, with all its attendant circumstances, I am utterly opposed to it for many reasons. I oppose it, in the first place, because it is founded upon an utter misconception, as it seems to me, of the nature and objects of diplomatic institutions. This resolution seems to suppose that one of the uses which may be made of them is to reward or punish other Governments by continuing or suspending such relations, according as we approve or condemn their course towards their own subjects. Now, sir, they have never been used as a means of punishing other Governments in any instance of which I can find an account in history.

Ministers are dismissed in time of war, it is true, not as a punishment to the Government, but as a measure of safety and precaution at home.

To use relations of this sort for such a purpose would be to reverse the design for which they were created. They were designed as the means of settling disputes and preserving peace; they are maintained to substitute the more convenient form of oral conference for written communications. They bring the parties together, and by personal presence and proximity facilitate the settlement of differences. The whole object of such agencies is the preservation of peace, and it is contrary to the universal sense of civilized men to use such relations as the means of national insult and offence.

I am opposed to this proposition, also, for another reason. Supposing it to be founded upon true principles, its application is partial, unequal, and in that sense, is unjust. This objection has already been made, and a proposition, I believe, is now pending to add Russia to the list of the courts with which our diplomatic relations are to be suspended. Assuredly there would be as much reason for thus punishing Russia as Austria; for the offence is the same or even worse. What shall we say to France, too, if we are to assume this general supervision of the conduct of foreign Governments? Is there nothing in the course of the French Government in Italy to shock our republican sensibilities? Have they not interfered against the rights of man and popular liberty, according to our conception of the terms? Nay, sir, the conduct of His Holiness himself is not beyond the reach of our criticism; for his course towards his subjects has been utterly opposed to our view of his duties and their rights. We ought, then, in order to be just, to suspend our diplomatic relations with all of these courts—Austria, Russia, France, and Rome. I am not sure, sir, that the list would stop here, if I chose to pursue this examination further. But it is unnecessary for my purpose to continue the investigation; I have said enough to show the inequality of the proposition as it now stands. But I have a third objection to this resolution, which is founded on the fact that it casts reproach on our history and past conduct towards foreign Governments—a reproach which, in my opinion, has not been deserved by the sages and patriots who have gone before us, or, indeed, by any of those who have hitherto been responsible for the course of our Government. If, as this resolution assumes, it is our duty to observe the conduct of foreign Governments towards

their own subjects, and to punish them in this mode for acts of oppression towards their citizens, or for violations of the rights of man according to our conception of their nature, then, sir, in times past we have grievously failed in the discharge of our obligations. From the institution of our Government up to this period, how often ought we not to have exercised this power in the discharge of such duties! With how many Governments should we not have suspended such relations at the time of the partition of Poland! With how many during the aggressive wars of Napoleon! Which of the European nations would have escaped after the treaty of Vienna, and during the existence of the Holy Alliance? Why, sir, we could not have recalled ministers fast enough about that period to have signalized our abhorrence of the daily violation of the rights of man, in the arbitrary disruption of territories long united together, and the forced connection of people to Governments to which they were averse. I should waste the time of the Senate, if I were to attempt the enumeration of the cases in which we have failed to act as this resolution assumes we ought to have done. How often should we have suspended relations with France, with England! Indeed, what Government is there in the civilized world with whom we should not have suspended our relations at some period of our history, according to the principles now laid down? Perhaps we might have preserved diplomatic relations with the republic of San Marino, by way of showing that it was possible to maintain such a connection with somebody, according to the principles of action which we had laid down upon such subjects. Sir, if this resolution be right, then our Government has been grievously wrong in its past course in relation to these matters. To vote for this resolution is to record that censure. For one, I am not willing to do it. I believe they acted wisely and well. They deserved the thanks of mankind for their foreign policy, which has won, as I had supposed, universal respect.

But, Mr. President, I object to this resolution, also, because it is indefinite in its nature. We are to suspend diplomatic relations for how long? Until Austria either establishes a government to suit not herself or the Hungarians, but to suit us in that province, or until she makes an apology to us for her misconduct to her own subjects. These are the only modes of atoning for the offence upon which we have acted. Having once entered upon the affair, we could not withdraw from it with honor, until some such satisfaction was afforded. Should we have a right to expect such a termination of the difficulty? Could we ever hope thus to humble the pride of the Austrian Government? I think not; and, if so, this suspension of diplomatic relations would be for an indefinite period. But the question of time is not the only thing left indefinite in these resolutions; the manner in which the deed is to be done is also indefinite. We are to suspend diplomatic relations with Austria. In what manner? By merely recalling our own minister, or by offering passports to the Austrian chargé who is now near this Government? This resolution, to be consistent with itself, ought to do both; for these relations would not be suspended if an Austrian minister were here. But it may be said that, under the circumstances connected with the passage of this resolution, Austria would cer-

tainly recall her minister. Undoubtedly, she would be forced to do so from self-respect; and, although it would have been more manly to have dismissed their minister at once, yet it would be done as certainly and effectually in this indirect mode as in the other. We constrain the minister to depart as much by one mode of action as the other. Now, sir, if I am right in this construction of the resolution—and I maintain that I am, whatever may have been the intentions of its author—we, in effect, deny to Austria the right of embassy to us—a right secured to every sovereign State at peace with us by the well-established law of nations. I need not quote authors upon national law for so well-established a principle as that of the right of every sovereign State to send ministers to another sovereign State whilst there is peace between them. There is no respectable writer on the law of nations, with whom I am acquainted, who does not recognize this right. Indeed, it belongs to the very nature of diplomatic functions that such a right should exist. These were created to settle disputes and secure peace. As ministers of peace, these persons are respected by all civilized nations and men: civilized man shows his homage to peace by the securities and safeguards with which he surrounds such missions. Nay, under certain precautions and formalities, the right of embassy exists even as between belligerents; otherwise all the avenues to peace would be closed, except those of conquest on the one side and absolute submission on the other. It is and ought to be the universal sense of civilized man that the doors of peace are never to be closed. Instances have been cited, I know, in contravention of this principle, but they were not even exceptions to the rule. It has been said that a Government may dismiss a foreign minister. So it may for his personal misconduct, but not for the acts of his Government, unless this dismissal is the precursor of war.

There are instances enough, I know, of ministers who were dismissed for personal offences which they could not claim to commit near another Government, under any immunity pretended to be derived from the law of nations. The Duke of Orleans, when Regent of France, during the minority of Louis XV., imprisoned a Spanish minister; but he detected him in plots not only against his life, but his Government. So, too, in other cases of personal offences against the municipal law, or for insults offered to it, passports have been given by the offended Governments near which the ministers resided. But this right of dismissal, even for alleged personal misconduct, is by no means absolute. We have had a very recent case in the dismissal of Sir Henry Bulwer by the Spanish Government; and Lord Palmerston, in his correspondence with M. Isturiz, the Spanish minister, upon that subject, controverts very ably a doctrine which he alleges was advanced by the Duke of Sotomayor, "that any government was entitled to obtain the recall of any foreign minister, whenever, for reasons of its own, it might wish that he should be removed." "It is quite true," says Lord Palmerston, "as said by the Duke of Sotomayor, that the law of nations and international usage may permit a government to make such a demand; but the law of nations and international usage also entitle the Government, to whom such a request may be preferred, to decline to comply with it." He says,

in support of his view, that it may happen that the very cause of the desire to get rid of him is to be found in the fidelity of the minister to his trust. He may urge with perseverance a claim of his own Government, which is disagreeable to the Government to which he is accredited. But be this as it may, these instances do not affect the right of embassy, which belongs to every sovereign State whilst at peace. To deny this right is an insult to the Government thus aggrieved, and a violation of the law of nations. Vattel says, B. 4, chap. 5, sec. 63:

"A sovereign attempting to hinder another from sending and receiving public ministers does him an injury, and offends against the law of nations. It is attacking a nation in one of its most valuable rights, and opposing what nature herself gives to every independent society. It is breaking the bonds by which nations are united, and offending them all."

Why, sir, this denial of the right of embassy to us by the French Government was once a cause of grave complaint on our part. The preamble of the act of Congress which, in 1798, abrogated the treaties between us and France, recited the dismissal of our minister as one of the causes of grievance which justified the course of the United States towards that Power—a course which led to the state of hostilities which was called "a quasi war." Why, sir, as I said before, to deny the right of embassy, is to shut the door of peace; and I trust we shall not be found setting such an example in this age of boasted refinement and progress. When this resolution is viewed in connection with all its attendant circumstances, I think I might venture to challenge the production of a precedent which shall sanction it.

There is, however, another, and, in my view, still more fatal objection to the proposition before us. It assumes the right of one Government to interfere in the domestic affairs of another—a right which would be dangerous, in the last degree, to the peace and liberties of mankind. If this resolution have any meaning at all, it must be intended as a rebuke to Austria for her conduct, not towards us, but towards her own subjects. The whole proceeding would be utterly without meaning, if it had not been based upon the avowed grounds of indignation and abhorrence at the course of the Austrian Government towards the Hungarians, towards its own subjects. Upon such grounds as these, this measure would be a flagrant and direct insult to the Austrian Government. An insult is an injury, and an injury often of the deepest kind. "National honor is national property of the highest value. The sentiment in the mind of every citizen is national strength. It ought therefore to be cherished"—said Mr. Monroe in his inaugural address. Now, if we have a right to punish Austria for her conduct towards the Hungarians in this mode, why not in any other? If the right to punish for such an offence exists at all, it must exist to such an extent as may be necessary to afford a remedy for the evil. If we have the right to punish them by insults, why not by blows? No man can show any distinction in principle between the two pretensions.

If the right exists at all, it exists to whatever extent may be necessary to make it effectual. Now this claim to punish a foreign Government for its conduct towards its own subjects assumes the right to supervise and control their management of their domestic affairs. Can any pretension

be conceived which is more arrogant and insulting? It is a virtual denial of the sovereignty of the foreign State upon which we are acting. For if sovereign at all, the government—no, the people—according to our notions, constitute the supreme authority in the land, and they would not be supreme in authority if another nation could control them.

Mr. FOOTE. I do not wish to interrupt my friend at all, but I am sure he will be misunderstood in a manner disagreeable to himself. His present words would lead us to understand—I do not believe he meant to be so understood—that it is his opinion that the Government of Austria is legitimately supreme in Hungary, which I will certainly deny, and attempt to prove if the honorable Senator insists.

Mr. HUNTER. If the gentleman had attended to what I said, he would have perceived that I modified the proposition so as to adapt the proposition to our particular views. But it matters not to this argument in what part of that body politic the sovereignty resides. It is sufficient for us that the sovereignty of that country is not in us, that it resides somewhere there, and is entitled to control the domestic affairs of that country, without supervision or interference on our part. There is no supreme power there, if we can control it. Every existing Government is supposed to be the creation of the sovereign power in the State until it is overthrown, and foreign nations must respect it as the representative of that sovereignty, so long as it is clothed with its powers. I say, then, Mr. President, that this resolution assumes the right to interfere in the domestic affairs of other nations, and in so doing makes a pretension neither consistent with the laws of nations nor consonant with our own views of the rights of man. I will dispose of the latter branch of the proposition first, because it may be done most briefly. Is not this assumption of control in the affairs of Hungary a claim "*pro tanto*" of the right of government there? I see no distinction between the two; and, if so, we are claiming to govern those who did not delegate to us that right. I thought that it was a cardinal maxim with us, the fundamental principle of our institutions, that men had the right of self-government. And yet we claim the right to interfere in the domestic affairs of a people who gave us no authority to represent them, and of whose language, wishes, and necessities, we are ignorant. Do such pretensions as these square with our notions of republican principle? I think not, sir; and yet, in our effort to show a sympathy for human rights, we are called upon so to act as to negative the most precious of all social rights—the right of man to self-government. But, Mr. President, this claim of intervention is opposed to the law of nations; and this resolution renounces all that has been gained in the amelioration of that code for the protection of the right of self-government by the friends of human liberty in the course of the present century. As the law of nations is now expounded, no nation is allowed the right of interference in the domestic affairs of another, except when it becomes necessary to do so for its own peace and safety; or, in other words, in self-defence. Does our proposed interference in this case come within the exception which I have just stated? No man can say that it does. Mr. President, I will venture the assertion that, since the

treaty of Westphalia, no such broad pretension has been made to the right of intervention by any civilized nation, which has not led to such consequences as discouraged the repetition of such acts, or which has not been opposed by some one of the first-rate Powers of Europe as a violation of the law of nations. I say since the peace of Westphalia, because that was a war of religion, a civil war in the great Christian republic between Catholic and Protestant, who fought whenever and wherever they met each other, without reference to distinctions of territorial boundary or of race. Since that time there have been cases of intervention, I know; but they were followed by the consequences which I have stated. I shall have cited to me, perhaps, the interference of other European powers with revolutionary France. But were the consequences such as to encourage the repetition of the experiment? Why, sir, France launched herself like a fire-ship amidst the nations of the earth, and kept all Europe in uproar and conflagration for nearly the third of a century. The consequences of this intervention were such as to teach Europe a lesson on this subject which it has remembered and respected. There have been two popular revolutions in France since that period; but no other Governments have interfered, although they probably would have been glad to have done so, had they not remembered the past. France, herself, sir, has not forgotten the lesson; for she, too, declared the doctrine of non-intervention in the affairs of neighboring Governments, even in her first outbreak of republican zeal. The exception she made to the rule was, that she would interfere in favor of popular rights, if other nations interposed against them. Indeed, scarcely a case can be cited in which the powers interfering did not justify the act by assigning some other reason for it than that of the right to interpose. In the case of Greece, they justified themselves under the necessity—pretended or real—of keeping open the Levant for their commerce. And so in relation to the interposition between Turkey and Egypt by certain great powers of Europe. They pretended, as a justification, that they interfered to preserve the balance of power in Europe which was concerned in this question. Whether these pretences were true or false, the necessity for making them was a tacit homage to the great principle of non-intervention. It is true that the holy alliance did make at one time more extensive pretensions on this head than were recognized as just either then or now. These pretensions alarmed the friends of human liberty all over the world, and created great anxiety even here. This was one of the causes which led to Mr. Monroe's celebrated declaration, to which I shall presently refer more particularly. Great Britain, too, protested against these claims, which were viewed as alarming even to her. She protested against the intervention of other powers in the affairs of Naples as a violation of the law of nations, which she laid down upon this subject, as I have before stated. She refused to attend the Congress of Verona, and when France, under the sanction of certain of the great Powers of Europe, interfered in the affairs of Spain, Great Britain declared it to be an infraction of national law and a just cause for war if she chose to make it so. Then it was that alarm was felt both in England and this country, lest the Holy Alliance should claim the right of interposing in the contest be-

tween Spain and her colonies. Both Governments protested in advance, and the consequence of their joint action was the establishment of the non-intervention principle upon a firmer basis than it had ever rested upon before. This achievement was the great glory of Mr. Monroe's administration, which has challenged the respect and gratitude of the friends of liberty wherever they were found. The establishment of this principle is the great bulwark and security of the right of man to self-government, so far as national law can protect it at all. Now, sir, how earnestly did we hope that it would be respected in the late French revolution! How universally was it said that the hope for the success of France in that effort for liberty mainly depended upon the non-intervention of surrounding Powers! Sir, we have had a very recent and an interesting instance of the danger and offensiveness of such pretensions on the part of one government towards another. One of the causes of the recent difference between Great Britain and Spain grew out of a dispatch from Lord Palmerston to the Duke of Sotomayor, which the latter construed as an interference with the domestic affairs of Spain, and therefore an insult. And yet this was not a public act of the English minister, but a private letter of advice to the Spanish Government to be more liberal in its concessions to its subjects. The Spanish pride took fire; it was resisted as an act of intrusion and insult. The Duke of Sotomayor, in a letter to Mr. Bulwer, asks how the British Government would take it, if he were to advise it to be more liberal to the Irish, more kindly to its Asiatic subjects, and less stringent in its coercive measures at home—referring probably to those made and designed for the suppression of riots. Did the British minister in his reply claim the right of interference in the domestic affairs of another nation? On the contrary he excused the act upon the ground that it was a friendly letter of advice, designed for the Government only, and justified by the fact that his Government had rendered services to Spain, and was bound by treaty stipulations to aid and assist that Government again, should there be a necessity for it. Mr. President, I believe it is the universal sense of mankind that the admission of the principle of non-intervention is a corollary from the right of man to self-government and the existence of independence in a nation. Who that is familiar with the feelings of that period can forget the anxiety with which we looked to the maintenance of that principle at the time of Mr. Monroe's celebrated declarations, or the importance which we attached to it? We prepared ourselves to maintain the principle upon this continent, according to our own invariable practice towards the other nations of the earth, and were willing to stake all upon the issue. And yet here, in our own Senate, there is a proposition in direct opposition to that great principle, which at that time we were willing to stake everything to maintain. In 1823, Mr. Monroe announced the foreign policy of the United States in such terms as these:

"In the wars of European Powers, in matters relating to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so." "We owe it therefore to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." "With the existing colonies and dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments which have de-

etared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have on great consideration and just principles acknowledged, we could not view any interposition, for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by an European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

Again, he says :

"The late events in Spain and Portugal show that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact no stronger proof can be adduced than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on any principles satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force in the internal affairs of Spain. To what extent such interposition may be carried on the same principle, is a question in which all independent powers, whose governments differ from theirs, are interested—even those most remote, and surely none more so than the United States. Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same; which is, *not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers—to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us to cultivate friendly relations with*," &c.

These extracts, Mr. President, are sufficient to show that the great object of Mr. Monroe's declarations was, to protest against any departure from the principle of non-intervention. He asserted what was historically true—that we had practised towards other Powers upon this principle from the institution of our Government to that period. Such, sir, has been the wise and considerate policy of our Government towards foreign nations heretofore—a policy which has preserved our peace with the rest of mankind for the greater portion of our national existence, which has challenged the respect of others, and under which we ourselves have grown and prospered. Nay, more, sir: it has been our glory to have contributed something towards procuring some of the advantages of the principle of non-intervention to other nations of the earth; and in doing so, we have added to the securities for the right of self-government in man. But we are now invoked to reverse this wise policy, and overthrow, as far as our declarations can do so, this great principle of international law; and, what is strange, we are invoked to do it under the pretence of showing sympathy for down-trodden humanity, and indignation at the violation of popular rights. Sir, what greater injury could we inflict on the cause of popular rights in a system like the European—where arbitrary governments are the rule, and free governments the exception—than to overthrow the principle of non-intervention? What new line of foreign policy could we adopt so likely to endanger our own peace, as to set the precedent of ourselves interfering in the domestic affairs of others? What greater outrage could we offer to the right of a people to govern themselves, than to assume the direction of affairs in countries not connected with us politically or physically, and over people who have never delegated to us such authority? Where the authority is to be found for such an interference, I cannot divine—certainly not in the laws of nations, or in any of the maxims upon which we have heretofore practised. I hear much said about the public opinion of the world, and some talk of the punishment of those who sin against it. I fear there is some vague idea lurking in the popular mind, and insensibly influencing men to regard this public opinion of the world as a positive political force upon which it is allowable for particular Governments to act. I have heard a reference made to certain very beautiful remarks of a Sen-

ator from Massachusetts, upon the influence of public opinion upon this very Hungarian struggle, and it seems to have been supposed it was a necessary consequence of such views to carry out this public opinion of the world in legislative action. Mr. President, I, sir, was struck with those remarks; they were beautiful—and just as beautiful, in the sense in which they were probably designed. But the public opinion of which he spoke was not to be executed by political or physical, but by a moral force; not a public opinion to be represented by any one Government of the earth, or enforced by actual legislation. Sir, who or what body can undertake to collect or represent the public opinion of the world? A thousand invisible rills swell the great stream of that public opinion whose current and whose course mark the speed and the direction of the progress of man. And who shall arm himself with physical force to execute its decrees? Like heat and light, it pervades the universe. It moves *proprio vigore*—none can hasten or retard its course. Its subject is the human heart, its agents are thought and speech; it is felt in every hamlet, in every house in the civilized world; unbidden, and often unwelcome, it enters where it will; it penetrates into the secret recesses of the soul of man; and the bravest and the most reckless pause under that invisible touch which can bind or loose the ties that unite him to his fellow. None so high as to be beyond its reach; and low indeed must be he who is beneath its visitations. Arm it, sir, with physical power! what need has it of such assistance? When right, it is irresistible as truth itself; and it is only when wrong, when its own agents are in rebellion against it, that its influence fails. As a moral power, its influence upon man is great and beneficent; its tendencies are towards the promotion of peace and progress; but once treat it as the subject of political action, and the whole scene is not merely changed, but reversed. What had been a common blessing, will become the scourge and the curse of mankind in the collisions which it would occasion. Peace will no longer be the general rule and war the exception, but war will be the rule and peace the exception. I know, sir, that the sentiment is too prevalent, that this thing called public opinion authorizes and licenses us to interfere with the affairs of our neighbors. This sentiment is the result of that antagonism which is going on in this great moral world of ours between the principles of individualism and socialism—an antagonism found everywhere and daily growing fiercer and deeper. In a State it is the contest between him who would preserve as much of the right of individual action as is consistent with the peace and security of society, and those who would give the majority not only the rights, but, in the end, the property of each and of all. If you take a more extended view, and look to nations, you find the same antagonism at work between those who maintain the independence of each nation, and its right to act according to its own will, so long as it respects the equal rights of others, and those who believe that there is a sort of natural bond of federal union between the nations of the earth, and that every nation, under the authority of public opinion, is authorized to interpose and interfere with any and every other. These claim the right to take charge of the general interests of humanity, and oppose the

general will and opinion of man to the wishes and interests of any particular State. Sir, this attempt to set up the authority of the public opinion of the world in any particular State as above and beyond the sovereignty of its people within their own borders, had its commencement, far as I can trace it, in the movements of Exeter Hall—movements emanating from excellent motives and pure designs, but which, nevertheless, led their authors to a system of interference in the affairs of others which has proved very dangerous to the peace of mankind. Not content with acting upon their own Government, they undertook to move upon other nations, to influence their legislation. Not satisfied with the moral force of this public opinion as to the slave trade, which they were creating, they undertook to enforce it through political means and by physical power. Under their lead, their own Government became a general agitator on the subject of slavery, intruded wherever it could upon the legislation of other countries, and had well-nigh, under the sanction of the public opinion of the world, interpolated a new and dangerous provision in the code of national law. The distinguished Senator from Michigan was one of those who resisted this pretension most successfully, and he has won much just reputation by those exertions. But, sir, the evil has continued to increase. The same spirit of interference to which I have alluded as existing abroad soon reached our own country; and States have tampered and meddled with each other without just authority, until there is confusion throughout the land, and unhappy disputes have accumulated much more rapidly upon us than the means of settling them. Sir, we hear of world's conventions upon all possible subjects, to bring associated power into play, for the purpose of bearing on and bearing down wills of individual men, or of individual nations, who oppose their movements. This results from the illusory idea, which I fear is far more prevalent than is supposed, that there is a public opinion of mankind which is above the constitution and laws of particular States—an authority which justifies us in meddling in the internal affairs of other nations. Sir, we see an evidence of this to-day in the very resolution before us; for what but the idea that our opinion as a people was entitled, as a component part of the public opinion of the world, to a certain political force in other countries, could prompt such an interference as is contemplated in the domestic affairs of the Austrian Government? Mr. President, I am averse to all these centralizing and socialist movements. I belong to an older, and, I trust, a better school of politics. I belong to the school which believes that government to be happiest and best which leaves the largest measure of the liberty of individual action which is consistent with the peace and safety of society; to that school which maintains that it is best for all the nations of the world that each of them should be left to enjoy its right of independent action in all cases in which its exercise is consistent with the equal rights of others. I know, sir, that in society these are the centripetal and centrifugal forces, and that the order of nature consists in a just equilibrium. Increase the one too much, and the body flies to the centre, about which it should revolve; give an undue preponderance to the other force, the mass dissolves, and its wandering atoms are lost in space. In

all human affairs there is a just mean; but I do not know that I could define in what it consists; nor would this be the time to do so, if I could do it. No matter how uncertain the point at which this mean may be found, sure it is, that the centralizing tendencies have passed it. The tendency of every new movement seems to be in this direction: to centralize and associate power seems to be the great object of political achievement at the present day. Sir, I at least have no sympathy for these movements. Neither can I claim for myself that extensive spirit of philanthropy which distinguishes some gentlemen upon this floor. Especially, sir, can I make no pretensions to such a philanthropy as that which a Senator from New York claims for himself. I mean, sir, that Senator who would gather all mankind into one indiscriminate embrace, and who loves them all alike—in whose affections no distinctions are made as to the race, color, or condition of man, and who loves all men equally, whether they be English, French, German, Tartar, Negro, or Hottentot. Sir, the Senator from New York doubtless is an exception to the rule; but, as a general rule, I never knew one of those men, who loved all mankind alike, who cared much for anybody but himself. I never knew one of them who, to borrow a favorite expression from my friend from South Carolina, “had not a hand for all, and a heart for none.” But, sir, the Senator from New York is an exception, doubtless, to this rule. He loves all mankind, except himself, and would perhaps have loved himself if he had been born in Ireland. Mr. President, I have no such philanthropy; and I fear in that matter generally, I shall be deemed as little better than one of the wicked. I know, sir, that I shall be accused of a want of sympathy for the Hungarians, whose case excites so much attention here. So far as I am personally concerned, I care nothing for such accusations, for I have a witness within me which pronounces them false. But, sir, I should be unwilling to inflict a new pang upon the unfortunate Hungarian, by doing anything to give countenance to the idea that there was any mark or class of men here who did not respect and sympathize with him in his misfortunes. I was no uninterested observer of his struggle—no unmoved witness of its final catastrophe. If my good wishes could have availed him, he had them all. I have studied their history with interest, and learned to admire and respect their national character. There is a wild mixture of Oriental fervor and western chivalry about them which has always made them objects of rather a romantic interest. History, that great record of human affairs, is full of startling contrasts and striking vicissitudes, and the chapter of that great book which belongs to Hungary and her people is nearly as eventful as any. When I first heard, sir, that the Hungarian patriots had been forced to take refuge with the Turk, and seek at his hands the charity of an asylum which Christendom refused them, I could but recall the day when that country was the bulwark of Christendom against the Infidel, and Hunniades made good its title to that debatable land between the Crescent and the Cross. When I saw who the oppressor was, whose foot was upon the neck of bleeding Hungary, I could but recur to the time when a noble ancestress of his, who to the loveliness of woman added the soul of a Cæsar, threw herself upon those people for succor and protection.

The scene arose before me, as it appears on the pictured page of Macaulay, in which she is represented upon horseback, weak from recent suffering, yet strong in will, flushed under the weight of St. Stephen's iron crown, and after a fashion of her race, which would have been deemed extravagant by any but an Oriental imagination, waving the sword of State to the four quarters of the heavens, and bidding defiance to the earth. Still more visibly came before me that other scene, in which the young mother, with her child in her arms, appeared before the assembled magnates of Hungary, and, complaining that she was deserted and oppressed by the rest of the world, demanded assistance and protection from them; and, quick in answer to that appeal, all voices responded as one, in the exclamation, "Let us die for our King Maria Theresa!" True, even in that moment of enthusiastic fervor, not only to the principles, but to the very forms of their constitutional liberty, they devoted themselves not to the Empress of Germany, nor to the Queen of Austria, but to "their King Maria Theresa;" and king she was in all but her sex. The promise then made was redeemed in their blood; and the Croat, the Pandour, and the Hussar, as it is said, swept the face of northern Germany, until their very names became words of terror wherever they were known. The faithful page of history will attest how often the house of Hapsburg has been indebted to the Hungarian lance and Hungarian loyalty for assistance in time of need. Never has it despaired when the road was left open for retreat from Vienna to Hungary; nor has it ever considered any of its defeats as total whilst reserves were yet left upon which it could retire in that land so devoted to its colors. It was an unhappy day for that house which dissolved the spell of its name in Hungary, and broke the chain of old traditions which had mutually bound them together. It is hard to unite again the bonds of love, when once they have been severed; and the Hungarian will long remember in bitterness that the hand which has crushed him ought to have been extended to him in love, if there had been gratitude in the heart that guided it. It is said to have been the opinion of Dembinski before the Hungarian war, in which he figured so largely, that Austria might unite under her lead those Hunnish and Slavonic races who occupy so large a portion of the beautiful provinces of eastern Europe, and thus become not only what her name purports, (*æster-reich*), "the Kingdom of the East," but the first power on that continent. Mr. President, it is not for me to say how much of truth or error there might have been in such a conjecture. Certain it is, however, that a new formation is going on in those beautiful regions. Certain it is, that the "*disjecta membra*" of the great Slavonic body are slowly knitting together. It is very generally supposed that the elements of a new and formidable power, to be composed probably of those mixed races, are now gradually being gathered together. The advent of this power is looked for with doubt or apprehension, as speculation assigns the part to be cast for it by destiny, as being for or against the Russian influence. That it is to play an important part in the affairs of Europe, all seem to suppose. In this new organization, the Magyar race may occupy a

high and imposing place, if they can only learn to shake hands cordially with the Slavonian, whose ends ought to be akin to his own. I trust, sir, that such may be the destiny of the Hungarian; and the future is hopeful before him, should he choose to lead in the great Slavonian movement. Placed, as is the Magyar race, at the head of Hungarian society, which is also largely composed of Slavonians, the former may choose an exalted place if it will participate cordially in the general movement. Such I believe is the only hope for the Magyar race, but probably a sure and a bright one, if he will learn to realize his position. But, if he stands fixed and immovable, resisting the great Teutonic movement on the one side and the Slavonic on the other, he must be crushed as between the upper and the lower mill-stone. Hard as has been the lesson taught the Magyar race in its recent struggles, a knowledge of the truth which it teaches may be worth all the suffering which brought the truth home to it, that its hopes rested on a cordial participation in the great Slavonic movement. If there is no hope here for the Hungarian, I see none before him. It would do no good for foreign powers to interpose in his favor and give him armed assistance: still less would it be of any avail to offer him such a resolution of sympathy as this. There is not, sir, on the page of history an instance of a nation which has maintained its liberty by foreign aid; for the moment the protecting hand is withdrawn, it must fall unless it has some internal resources—some means within itself of maintaining its independence and for self-defence. I have said, sir, that this resolution of sympathy will do the Hungarian cause no good. But is that enough to say? Is there no danger that it may do that brave but unfortunate people some harm? It has been said by wise and observing men—we have the authority of McCulloch for the assertion—that the final catastrophe of Poland was probably hastened by imprudent speeches made in the British House of Commons and the French Chamber of Deputies. It is said that those imprudent but sympathizing speeches awakened false hopes in Poland, and led to unwise movements there. Is there no danger that such a course of action as is proposed here might give rise to unfounded hopes in Hungary, or increase, perhaps, their sufferings by irritating those who govern them? But, sir, be that as it may with regard to Hungary, I am not prepared to take this step from considerations of what is due to my own country. I give Hungary my best wishes, my earnest sympathy; but I prefer my own country to any other, and I cannot sacrifice its interests for those of another. I was sent here to legislate, not for foreign nations, but my own. I will not abandon my own duties in the attempt to discharge those of another. It would doubtless be pleasing to any generous mind to indulge the demands of sympathy; yet, sir, truth and justice are of higher obligation, and ought to be of higher consideration still. Mr. President, I cannot vote for this resolution. I owe it not only to my own country, but to the rights of man, of which so much is said, to preserve the wise and long-established policy of the former, and to stand by the principle of non-intervention as a high moral defence and security for the other.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 898 472 9



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 898 472 9

